

BALLYMACLINTON VILLAGE, CRYSTAL PALACE, FRANCO-BRITISH EXHIBITION 1908-09.

To all members who attended the spring meeting at Baden Powell House last year (1988) I apologise. You heard most of this story, and saw the items mentioned, but there are one or two new coincidences which have occurred since.

About 4 years ago I was looking through Advertising Cards at a Post Card Fair. Even without perfins on, these cards can be of interest to our hobby so I do glance at the names on the cards. At one stand I came across an Advertising Picture Postcard of "Ballymaclinton at the Crystal Palace - erected by the makers of McClinton's Soap". The printed message was from McClinton's Ltd., Donaghmore, Tyrone. It had a perfin on which did not match at all (D.B/&S). The postmark was also suspect, being Birmingham 1913 not from the Franco-British Exhibition.

As with all 'illegally used' perfins, I put it back in the box. An hour later I saw a mint postcard advertising "Colleen Soap" and the name and address were David Brown & Son, Ltd, and McClinton's Limited, Soap and Candle Manufacturers, Donaghmore, Tyrone.

Somewhere in my sub-conscious a bell rang. It took me 5 minutes of hard thought to remember what the connection was - there had been 100's of cards through my hands in the meantime. The next problem was to find the dealer with the D.B/&S card and hope it had not been sold. Suffice it to say - I found it and bought it, together with the mint card which tied the perfin to the firm of David Brown & Son.

The story does not end here. The perfin was a new die, so a new identity, and after it was published in the Bulletin in 1985 I had a letter from a Mr. George E.R. Ithell. In 1982 he had published a book "A Story of the Ballymaclinton Village 1908-10 Postal History's New Chapter". The book is the story of the Village at the Franco-British Exhibition, the unique postmarks of Ballymaclinton from the exhibition and the history of David Brown & Sons who, in 1895, took over the soap firm of McClinton's.

Mr. Ithell wanted to know how I knew the identity of the perfin, as Nora Wright had listed it in her Catalogue of Irish Perfins but did not know the identity of the user. This led to a most interesting correspondence and my purchase of the afore mentioned book.

Since then I have bought a few more Ballymaclinton Picture Post Cards from the 1908-09 Exhibition, but I have yet to come across another Perfin cover.

Like many stamp collectors I take the Post Office Philatelic Bulletin and it was an article in the October 1988 issue on the Franco-British Exhibition which brought this story to mind again. Ballymaclinton is mentioned as are illustrations of the special postmarks used by the Village and the Exhibition. So all these items together make a very interesting little display.

Ed. M.R.S.